

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1416

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, UK

SUBJ: WILSON VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION

1. DURING MY COURTESY CALL JANUARY 30 ON V.P. SUSLOV, CHIEF OF THE MFA SECOND EUROPEAN DIVISION (WHICH HANDLES THE UK), SUSLOV TOOK A STRIKINGLY UNENTHUSIASTIC APPROACH TO SOVIET-UK RELATIONS AND TO THE UPCOMING VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER WILSON. HE MADE NO ATTEMPT TO EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF SOVIET-UK TIES. INDEED HE MADE CLEAR THAT ANY POLITICAL DOCUMENTS FROM THE VISIT WOULD BE ON A DISTINCTLY LOWER LEVEL THAN THOSE WHICH THE SOVIETS HAVE SIGNED WITH THE US, THE FRG, AND FRANCE. REGARDING TRADE, IN WHICH THERE IS A LARGE BALANCE IN FAVOR OF THE SOVIET UNION, HE SAID THAT THE SIZE OF THE INCREASE IN TRADE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WOULD DEPEND ON "POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS." HE STATED THAT THE SOVIETS ARE UNHAPPY WITH THE BRITISH POSITION ON SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS, NAMING CSCE AND MBFR IN PARTICULAR AND IMPLYING THAT SOME CONCESSIONS IN THESE AREAS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE THE PREREQUISITE FOR EXPANDED TRADE. SUSLOV ALSO MADE SEVERAL ALLUSIONS TO THE IMPORTANCE OF US-SOVIET RELATIONS AND TO THE INFLUENCE THE US SHOULD BE ABLE TO EXERT ON ITS ALLIES.

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2. WE HAVE INFORMED THE BRITISH OF SUSLOV'S REMARKS

AND THE BRITISH COMMENT IS THAT THE SOVIETS SEEM INDEED TO BE TAKING A RIGID POSITION ON CSCE, WHICH AT THIS STAGE LOOKS LIKE BEING THE MAIN STICKING POINT IN THE COMMUNIQUE NEGOTIATIONS. THE BRITISH WERE ALSO INTERESTED BY SUSLOV'S REMARKS ON TRADE, SINCE THEY SEEM TO SEE THEMSELVES AS DEMANDEUR IN THAT AREA.

3. THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR HAS TOLD US THAT WILSON WILL ARRIVE THE AFTERNOON OF FEBRUARY 13 AND LEAVE THE AFTERNOON OF FEBRUARY 17. ON SCHEDULING, THE BRITISH PROPOSED WORKING MEETINGS FOR FRIDAY MORNING FEBRUARY 14, SATURDAY MORNING FEB 15, AND MONDAY MORNING FEB 17, WITH SUNDAY RESERVED FOR A TRIP TO LENINGRAD. THE SOVIETS RESPONDED WITH A SUGGESTION FOR MEETINGS THURSDAY EVENING, FRIDAY, AND MONDAY, WITH THE TRIP TO LENINGRAD OCCUPYING BOTH SATURDAY AND SUNDAY. THE BRITISH HAVE NOT BEEN ASSURED THAT WILSON WILL SEE BREZHNEV. WHEN I ASKED SUSLOV ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF BREZHNEV'S PARTICIPATION, THE ANSWER WAS, "WE NEVER INDICATE SUCH THINGS IN ADVANCE."

4. AMBASSADOR GARVEY TELLS US THAT DURING THE VISIT AN ECONOMIC COOPERATION PROGRAM AND A SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION PROGRAM, BOTH BASED ON THE TEN YEAR BILATERAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION AGREEMENT, MAY BE SIGNED. SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER MANZHULO IS NOW IN LONDON AND ALKHIMOV WILL JOIN HIM THIS WEEKEND IN AN ATTEMPT TO WRAP UP THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE VISIT IN ADVANCE. THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM HAS ALREADY BEEN INITIATED, AND A FEW OTHER AGREEMENTS, INCLUDING A MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES AGREEMENT, ARE EXPECTED. GARVEY SAID THAT WORK IS BEGINNING ON THE COMMUNIQUE, WHICH MAY BE IN THE FORM OF A JOINT DECLARATION. THE BRITISH BEAT THE SOVIETS TO THE PUNCH, OFFERING A DRAFT A WEEK AGO, BUT HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED A COUNTER DRAFT.

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